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## Feedback from the field – Phil Cottey talks about his experiences of using an alternative metaldehyde product...

Ferric phosphate has been the product of choice for slug control across the farm for the second year for Phil Cottey, who farms 225ha of winter OSR, wheat and grassland near Stock. The use of the product Derrex, whose active ingredient is 3% ferric phosphate rather than metaldehyde, has been deemed the “right tool for the job” by Phil Cottey, who has only used Carakol 3 for the first application on the rape this year and purely ferric phosphate since.

# DERREX<sup>®</sup>

Phil Cottey has land, which runs alongside the river Wid, which has been one of the main motivations for using the product; “I would rather that there wasn’t a ban on metaldehyde and that by using the alternative now, we can prove as an industry that we can be self-regulating, so we have the option to apply metaldehyde, when it is required in the future”, said Phil.

When asked about the price difference between the two products, Phil said that there is a premium for using ferric phosphate, but as a percentage over the whole crop, it works out to not be significantly different and it is a “less aggressive product” to use, in terms of handling and filling. The way that Derrex works, means that you don’t see the dead slugs like you would the following morning after a metaldehyde application. However, by monitoring the crop over the following days, Phil has been able to see its effectiveness and the trials have proved that it works in the field.



Look at the crop for results of effective control when using SluXX and Derrex products. Dead slugs cannot always be seen.

Have you tried using SluXX or Derrex on your farm? Do you use these products on the headlands or high risk fields? By using this product in high risk areas, this will reduce the amount of metaldehyde found in the rivers. Ask your agronomist or ring Teresa for more information about alternative products and keep your eye out in the newsletter for the results of more trials we are doing in the Chelmer and Blackwater catchment this autumn.

## Continuing the drive to reduce metaldehyde



As part of an ongoing commitment to manage metaldehyde in the river catchment, Essex & Suffolk Water is currently running a pilot to trial abstraction management, to protect Hanningfield and Abberton reservoirs and Langford and Langham water treatment works, from the peaks of metaldehyde and nitrates found in the rivers feeding them (Chelmer, Blackwater and Stour) during the application season. We are actively managing how much water is abstracted, from which river and at which times, to try to take only the highest quality water. In order to do this, Essex & Suffolk Water is now taking additional daily samples at the river intakes and at locations twenty four hours upstream, allowing for a result to be produced on the same day. These results are then considered along with feedback of slug pressure and pellet applications on the ground, rainfall and soil moisture deficit to make a daily decision on re-filling the reservoir. We are in the initial stages of the pilot at the moment, but have already altered daily pumping schedules in response to elevated Metaldehyde levels in the rivers. Managing abstraction from the rivers in this way needs to carefully balance the requirement to refill the reservoirs, to ensure that there is sufficient stored water for customer supply, whilst ensuring the reservoir concentrations of metaldehyde remain low to enable the company to meet the 0.1µg/l EU Standard. The ability to do this work, will complement your use of the product in the catchment, with the aim of safeguarding this important product for future years.



Hanningfield Reservoir

### 2013 Metaldehyde Update

Concentrations have been slowly rising this autumn and monitoring has shown that the levels on the 11<sup>th</sup> October were:

River Chelmer = 0.57µg/l

River Blackwater = 0.05µg/l

**Please remain vigilant.**

## Visits Available



**Soil Husbandry Visit** – Would you like to walk your fields with Philip Wright, experienced soil specialist, to look for compaction, structure, health and where remediation might be appropriate? If so, then this visit is for you, free of charge.



**Water Management Visit** – Have you noticed surface run-off on your farm? You are able to minimise the effect by using a simple feature such as, reed beds, sediment pond or swale. This visit provides advice and guidance about the best place to locate the feature on your farm along with construction guidelines?

If you are interested in these or the visits below, please get in touch with Teresa by ringing 07792 169545 or e-mail [teresa.meadows@nwl.co.uk](mailto:teresa.meadows@nwl.co.uk).

## PA4s Training

Slug pellet applicator training for those new to slug pelleting or with expiring Grandfather Rights.

**When:** Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October

**Time:** 9:00 - 12:00

**Where:** Radbourne Farms, Aythorpe Hall Farm, Aythorpe Roding, Dunmow, Essex, CM6 1RZ

**What:** Free training on the use of a slug pellet applicator plus £25 exam subsidy.

**Book:** Phone Teresa – 07792 169545

## The nitrate study results are in....

Fifteen farmers from across the catchment took part in a nitrate study over the winter of 2012/13. These participants monitored two land drains once a week for a period of 10 weeks and recorded the nitrate results. An analysis of the results and workshop discussion, concluded the main findings:

- **Oil seed rape and bean crops lose less nitrate through land drains than cereal cropping.** If 'high readily available N' manures are being applied to a crop, the best crop to place these organic manures before is oil seed rape.
- The establishment of **cover crops has the potential to lower the loss of nitrate** through the winter and cultivation techniques can be an influence.
- Heavy rainfall is a strong contributing factor to nitrate loss and therefore, **good soil structure and health is important** to reduce both surface run-off and land drain flow.
- The importance of **regular soil analysis** was highlighted by the results from the soil sampling undertaken as part of the study.

Given the exceptional weather over the last autumn, the group is going to replicate the study for this 2013/14 season. **Would you like to join us and be involved this autumn? You will receive a free nitrate testing kit, rain gauge and log book, in addition to Soil Mineral N, P, K, Mg and pH soil sampling of the two fields that are part of the study.** All participants last year commented on how useful it was to be a part of the study and the discussion surrounding the data, as well as to compare different practices and how not to lose N and money down the drain!

Contact Teresa Meadows for more information and how to join us this year.



## On-farm advice provided through the Partnership

We have the following free farm advisory visits available this autumn and winter:

### Nutrient Management

**Planning** - Check your nutrient and NVZ records / plans...especially important now with the RPA doing NVZ inspections.

### Fertiliser/Slug Pellet Spreader

**Calibration** – Find out how accurately your machines are spreading their prills or pellets and save money on your bottom line.

### Pesticide Handling

**Area/Biobed/Biofilter/Spray Store Construction Guidance** – All you need to know before you design your new sprayer filling and handling area.

To take advantage of this offer, please contact Teresa using the details at the top of this newsletter.

Look out for the next catchment newsletter: Winter 2013

The Chelmer and Blackwater Catchment Partnership is supported by:

